

MAX FREEDMAN

On Coping With Communism

Fulbright's Outline of Policy Dangers In Power Swing to West Is Lauded

Senator William Fulbright, whose position as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee gives him special authority in world affairs, has analyzed the nature of the Communist challenge in an address that should be read with equal attention in the Kremlin and the White House. In delivering the William Clayton lectures at Tufts University, he took full advantage of his academic surroundings to speak with precision and clarity about many matters which politicians are usually afraid to discuss with any frankness.

Never is there any suggestion by Senator Fulbright that Nikita Khrushchev's strategy is less dangerous than Stalin's rough methods. On the contrary, he argues that the new program may be more dangerous precisely because it is more intelligent and subtle. It already has brought Soviet power, or the threat of Soviet interference, to areas that lay beyond the scope of Stalin's ambition. Stalin was content to send the Russian army into areas of weakness either close to the Soviet Union or else clearly established as traditional targets of Russian aggression. Mr. Khrushchev, by contrast, has stirred up trouble in places as diverse as Cuba, the Middle East and the Congo. Nor is the end in sight.

But there is one important fact which was absent from the dictator-states before the last war. Unless reason deserts the Kremlin, there will be no imitation of the suicidal folly of Nazi Germany. Hitler was a dictator in a desperate hurry. Mr. Khrushchev believes time is his invincible ally. The very nature of the Russian state imposes certain restraints on war-makers that were unknown in the era of Fascist power. This can hardly be considered as a perfect assurance, but it is not worthless.

and it gives free nations the time and the chance to build their defenses against attack.

Up to this point there probably would be general agreement among reflective people with Senator Fulbright's analysis. We now enter the area of greatest controversy where, in fact, Senator Fulbright displays his greatest wisdom.

He is no enemy of the emergent nations. He wishes them well and is ready to help them—within the limits of American resources. But his first emphasis falls on the NATO community which he wants to unify and strengthen far beyond its present structure. He argues that forces are now at work that will swing the balance of power decisively in favor of the Western nations. When this happens, two contrary dangers will emerge to threaten the peace.

In Russia a powerful group will inevitably argue that Russia must strike first to prevent a fatal erosion of Soviet influence in the world. In America there will certainly be a powerful minority that will contend the Western alliance must use all its strength to break the Communist enemy. It goes against American tradition and character, Senator Fulbright concedes, to have military superiority and to shrink from using it against an implacable foe. He urges Americans who still hold these traditional views to ask themselves the searching question whether the concepts of unconditional surrender and total victory have any meaning in the nuclear age. He thinks they are dangerous principles which should form no part of American policy.

Senator Fulbright would use American power and the growing strength of the Western alliance only against "communism, imperialism, and never against mere Com-

munist doctrine. This means, in practical terms, that Russia, all the satellite states, and East Germany would not be exposed to military pressure that might explode in war. Once this restraint on Western policy is understood in Moscow there may be a chance to talk constructively about many matters that now are themes for invective or excuses for deceit. Many will disagree with Senator Fulbright—far more than can answer his arguments with any logic—but he has put us in his debt by inviting us to examine anew these frozen dogmas of the cold war.